

succession.¹ Indeed, there was never more to be quiet in the land till the great House of Lancaster had finally overthrown the elder branch of the Plantagenet dynasty (1899). The infatuated fondness of Edward the Third for John of Gaunt, the revenues and powers that he willingly surrendered to him, served to hasten the event.

In June the old man sank at last. Two days before his death, the temporalities of the see of Winchester were restored to William of Wykeham, a sign of the change of political atmosphere now^r so imminent.² On the 21 Bt Edward the Third died. He was buried in Westminster Abbey on the Confessor's mound, among the tombs of the Hantagonet Kings.

During the first half of his long reign there had been a period of national glory and prosperity, to which we are accustomed to look back with pride as the first appearance of a homogeneous English people on the stage of Continental history. In the last twenty years of his life it became apparent that England was not strong enough in men and money to occupy permanently the first place in Europe. Her fleets and commerce were driven *oil* the Boas, her armies no longer attempted to maintain her continental empire* If it is not just to put all the blame for the catastrophes of his later years on Edward's head, neither is it just to the English people to attribute all the earlier successes solely to his vigorous personality. His policy, in so far as it recognised the importance of sea-power and commerce, had been good ; in so far as it revived the dream of a continental empire, it was fraught with terrible and far-reaching disaster. It may be doubted how much the individuality of Edward the Third had been responsible for either the one side of his policy or the other. Both were inevitable in the stage of experience Englishmen had then reached, and the nation approved equally of the war by sea and of the war by land.

The student of his later years must admit that Edward *«vas weak and foolish in allowing himself to become the tool of a set of politicians who stand convicted of more corruption than was, even at that time, customary or tolerable in public life.

¹ *Charters of XHtchy of Lancaster*•» Hardy, 32-4 an<! 82-70;
Report of Deputy Keeper of Public Ei&cords, p. iv, * See Ap, Thirtieth